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The Highlander

Thursday **Feb 12 2026** | Issue 726

INSIDE: CREATIVITY RUNS WILD AT STUDENT EXHIBITION PAGE 11 **FREE**

Gliding through Glebe

Evan Backus pushes off at the start of the senior boys' race as Hal High hosted COSSA Nordic at Glebe Park Feb. 11. *Photo by Lisa Gervais.*

Cuba flight crisis hits Highlanders' vacation plans

By Lisa Gervas

Haliburton County travel agent Machenzie Vasey was on maternity leave when COVID-19 disrupted international travel, so says the decision by major Canadian airlines to cancel all holidays to Cuba this week has been the craziest thing she has experienced in the industry.

The Highlander spoke with Vasey shortly after she had gotten off of a plane for a three-week holiday in Florida with family.

While her husband took the kids to the pool, she began to check her messages; knowing that the cancellations would impact County clients currently in Cuba, or planning to go over the next six weeks.

Canada's major airlines have all suspended service to Cuba, with Air Transat announcing Monday evening it was joining Air Canada and WestJet in cancelling all flights, as the Caribbean island's major airport warns it will run out of jet fuel. All three airlines said they had plans to bring travellers home to Canada.

Vasey, a home-based independent consultant with Air Transat, said she checked her emails and it was "insane."

Vasey said that between now and mid-April, she had eight couples booked to travel to Cuba, "but will not now, obviously.

One family was flying from Calgary to Toronto to catch a connector. She said they had already been disrupted by a hurricane in Jamaica.

"I have a couple of clients who are stuck right now and have to get on one of the repatriation flights that are

Continued **'Situation'** on page 6

Minden merchants join forces

By Lisa Gervais

Following its second meeting Feb. 4, Minden Business Working Group co-lead Mathew Renda said the Haliburton Highlands Chamber of Commerce-supported initiative "has some pretty good momentum" at the moment.

The new collective held its inaugural meeting in early December.

Renda said the group had been "years and years and years" in the making. He said they tried to get something going a few years ago, but were unable, perhaps because of the people involved, the timing, or the way they were going about it.

"We kept thinking and thinking until another group of people said 'okay, I think we can make this work this time' and asked 'how do we do it?' and this is where we are now."

Renda, of Boshkung Brewing Co., is first vice president of the board of the chamber.

"We are operating under the Chamber of Commerce. That allows us to use their administration, their insurance, bylaws,

Continued **'Downtown'** on page 2

Highlander news

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Downtown 'dying year after year'

to get grant funding through the chamber. It won't be the forever plan. This was a way to get us up and running as quickly as possible without the process of incorporating, trying to start a BIA (business improvement area,) and stuff like that."

Renda said one day the working group may morph into a BIA.

"I just don't think we're there yet…I don't think jumping right back into levies and all of that other stuff is what the business community is looking for. I think having a nice, organized, group to get something done, and accomplish things, was the right decision, with a BIA possibly in the future."

Renda indicated that mayor Bob Carter and councillors Shirley Johannessen and Ivan Ingram currently make up an informal subcommittee of council focusing on downtown revitalization. While the working group is not directly dealing with them, Renda said they are supportive.

"I think having one unified voice to go to council with any issues that the business community is having is a great thing."

Renda said people are tired of talk but no action. He added that based on the two meetings they've held, "the community is ready for action."

Paint the town

Under the leadership of businessman, Jim Ecclestone, the group is organizing a 'paint the town' community downtown beautification project over two Saturdays in April, April 18 and 25.

Ecclestone is talking to business owners about helping out to finance paint and supplies.

"A lot of people have volunteered and signed up," Renda said. 'I think that's step one of many."

Renda said the working group has come at a critical time for the downtown.

"It is definitely something that is necessary. I've only lived in Minden six years, and it's gotten dated. I don't know what it was like before, but everyone tells me it was a hopping town, and it's just kind of died off year after year."

Ecclestone purchased the former Rockcliffe and has been working on the façade with future plans for the site. Minden Auto Care has also had a facelift.

Renda said, "any business that is forward-facing to the customers needs to take time and look at our buildings and how we present ourselves to the community and see if we can do anything.

"It's tough, business is down, cash flow is hard at this time of year, but the status quo is not acceptable anymore. That goes for every business, new to old. If we want to continue to drive people to our town and have them stick around and have them spend their hard-earned money, we have to do something. We try to do one improvement to the brewery every year."

Asked about the former Beaver Theatre and old fire hall,

Minden Auto Care has been transformed replete with a moose icon. *Photo by Lisa Gervais.*

Renda said both are "eyesores." However, he noted the Beaver Theatre is privately-owned and all the working group can do is reach out to the owner to perhaps help to replace the existing plywood to make it look better. He said he is pleased council is planning to spend $50,000 towards doing something with the old fire hall. He'd like to see Bobcaygeon Road closed to vehicular traffic on Saturdays for the farmers market.

There is also talk of a Minden moose branding theme. "Give the town a bit of identity; every town needs something to rally behind."

Township survey

The Township of Minden Hills is working with Karen Jones Consulting Inc. on developing its strategic plan, launching an online prioritization survey. The survey will be available for input until Feb. 27 at 4:30 p.m. Go to https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Minden

They will also have paper copies available at the arena, cultural centre, municipal office and the Scotch Line landfill. They need to be returned by Feb. 23 at 4 p.m. to be included in the process.

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Ramsay buys into Huskies future

By Mike Baker

Haliburton County Huskies general manager Ryan Ramsay is putting his money where his heart is, taking ownership of the Ontario Junior Hockey League (OJHL) franchise to ensure it remains in the Highlands.

A key part of the organization dating back to its days in Whitby, Ramsay has purchased a controlling stake in the team from his father-in-law, Paul Wilson. Speaking to *The Highlander* Feb. 9, the pair confirmed the franchise will remain in Haliburton County for the 2026-27 season.

"This team is special to me – I moved my family up here in 2021 to try to make this work. Paul has put a lot into this, financially and just in his day-to-day… but now it's my turn to step up and try to pull this together," Ramsay said.

Wilson noted he's invested over $1 million in the Huskies, including $150,000 on the team's locker room at S.G. Nesbitt Memorial Arena and $20,000 installing drink rails in the rink. While support from the community has been strong, from sponsors and fans attending games, Wilson said he hasn't turned a profit yet in the team's five seasons in the Highlands.

That was a leading factor in him putting the organization up for sale last fall. So too his desire to take a step back from his role selling season tickets, finding sponsors and generating ads.

"I am getting a bit older and there has to be a plan for me to slowly bow out," Wilson said. "That's where Ryan will be stepping up a bit now."

Wilson will be staying on as team president. Ramsay, who has juggled the general manager role with his position as skills and development coach with the Ontario Hockey League's Peterborough Petes this year, confirmed he will take a more active role with the Huskies again next season.

Wilson said there were others interested in purchasing the team, but none would have kept the franchise in Haliburton County.

"Ryan and I have put a lot of effort into this. We think the team has been pretty successful. We've developed a great fanbase, so at least for the short-term we're going to try to keep the team here," Wilson said. "In turning the team over to Ryan, the key to staying here will be balancing the budget. We haven't managed that once yet, but we made some mistakes in our early years running the team. We spent money where we probably didn't need to. Given the experience we have now, I think we can turn this around.

The team has an annual budget of around $500,000, which covers everything from accommodation for players, payments to billet families, arena and bus rentals, registration fees with the OJHL, Hockey Canada and Ontario Hockey Association, staff salaries and equipment.

With the team's lease up in Minden at the end of next season, Ramsay said that gives him a little over a year to right the ship.

"If I can't make this work and the team continues to lose money, I'll have no choice but to sell. And we know now that probably means the community loses the team," Ramsay said.

Great support

Wilson thanked the community for backing the team over the years, noting they're the lifeblood of the organization.

"We have to continue to get the sponsorships we've been getting – we can't survive without that… attendance has been down this year, but we're blaming that on the cold weather. This has been the coldest winter we've had. I can't blame people for not wanting to sit out in that rink when it's cold," Wilson said.

The franchise has approached Minden Hills to enquire about installing heaters in the stands. Candace McGuigan, director of community services with the township, said that is something on the municipality's radar.

"This is a consideration for the future and staff is actively investigating options available and [the] most cost-effective route," McGuigan said. "We are in the early stages and consulting with other rinks with heat systems in their stands for their feedback and operational costs to run."

Minden Hills mayor, Bob Carter, noted council has not made any commitment to install heaters.

With the Huskies recently securing a playoff spot – the fifth straight season they've managed that in the County – Wilson said this year's success feels even better given the franchise's change in approach to teambuilding last summer.

Haliburton County Huskies general manager Ryan Ramsay is taking ownership of the team from Paul Wilson, who is staying on as club president. *Photo submitted.*

"Over the years, we've spent a lot of money on OHL players that we probably didn't need to spend. This year, we decided not to go out and steal a bunch of OHL players. We believed we could bring our players up through the system and be just as good," Wilson said.

The Huskies are fifth in the East Conference with 28 wins, 14 losses, five overtime losses and one tie. They're two points back of the Newmarket Hurricanes and Pickering Panthers in third and fourth.

With the Huskies beating the Stouffville Spirit and Trenton Golden Hawks – the conference's top two teams - convincingly this season, Ramsay believes this squad has what it takes to win a championship.

"The past few years our team has been right there, but, last year especially, injuries really set us back. We were pretty beat up by the end of the season… this year, we've managed to stay pretty healthy, and we've beaten all the top teams in our conference. We've shown we can get the better of them… I'm excited to see how far this team can go."

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Highlander news

Dysart debates contentious STR bylaw

By Mike Baker

With Dysart et al processing around half the applications it was anticipating during the first full year of the County's new short-term rental bylaw, some councillors and staff are openly questioning whether the program is working.

At a Jan. 27 meeting, while delivering his monthly report on licensing uptake, the township's chief building official (CBO), Karl Korpela, said 311 STRs had been identified in Dysart since October 2024, well short of the 500-plus initially projected.

Korpela said 56 applications were received between Oct. 1 and Dec. 31, 2024, with 54 approved and two denied. Last year, the township received 253 applications, approving 240 and denying 12. As of late January, the township had received two new applications this year.

With each application carrying a $500 charge, the township has brought in $153,500 through the program. According to Dysart et al treasurer Brayden Robinson, just over $52,400 of that went to Granicus, the U.S.-based company contracted to manage the program on behalf of the four townships in Haliburton County, in 2025, with another $52,600 going to the firm this year. A three-year contract signed in 2024 pegged Dysart's costs at just over $130,000.

With the township also planning a public survey, to be managed by an outside consultant, mayor Murray Fearrey is worried the township will soon be "in the hole" on the STR file.

"I think we're awful close. The cost of getting people in to do a survey is going to be pretty close to what our net revenues are," Fearrey said.

Robinson noted the township has collected an additional $62,000 in MAT tax through the program, with $31,000 staying with Dysart and the rest going to the County.

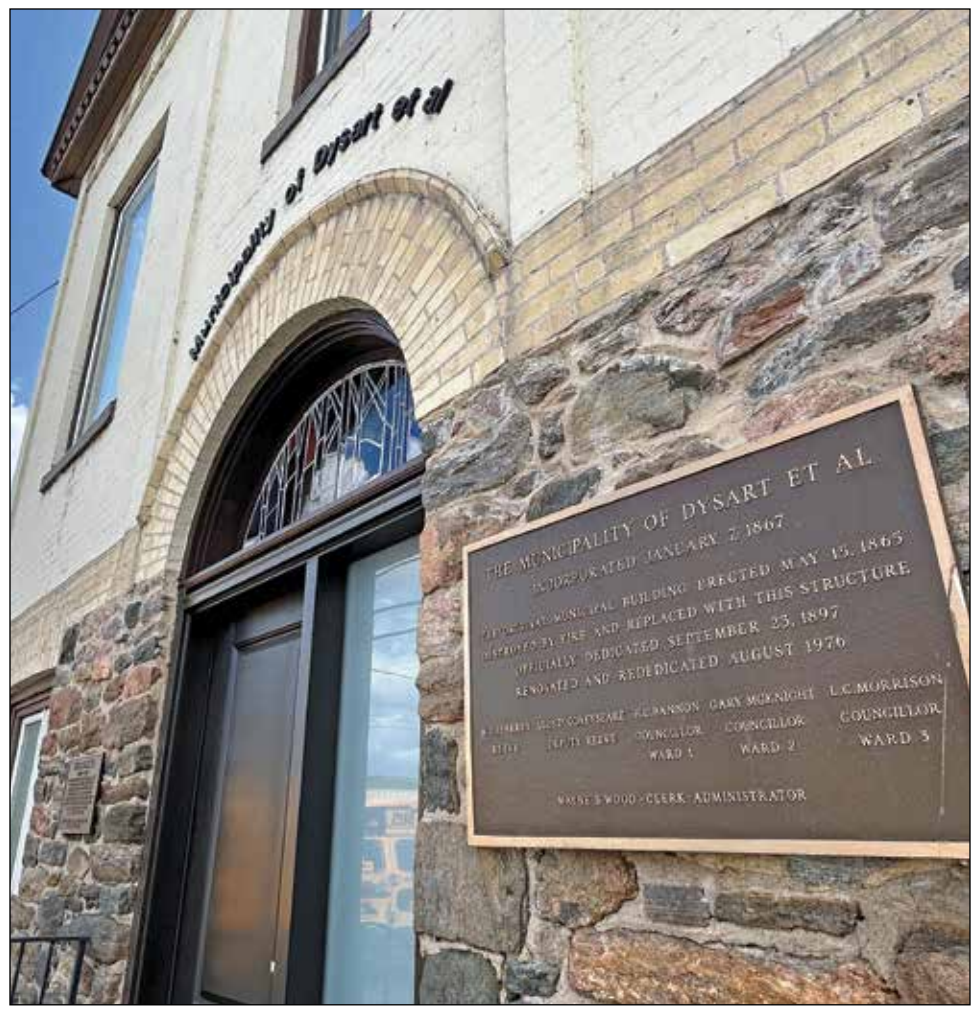
"I should note as well, that 2026 will be the first year that the program is fully implemented, so the financial results from 2025 may not be reflective of what is expected moving forward," Robinson said.

Korpela told the mayor the survey, intended to gather feedback on the program, is on hold with the township's STR lead, Hailey Cole, away.

"I'm not sure when we'll get around to finalizing the survey," Korpela said.

Fearrey said bylaw staff have spent significant time getting the program up and running, noting their salaries should be factored into the cost.

"It's part of regular staff time to review applications. The more we have, the more time we spend on it," Korpela said. "The first year is going to be the hardest year because they're brand-new applications. So we have to go through them with a fine tooth comb. But once that's done and we're just doing renewals, the process is much simpler."



Dysart council is questioning whether the short-term rental bylaw introduced in 2024 is having the desired effect. *File.*

Appeals process 'waste of time'

Coun. Carm Sawyer said he attended a recent STR appeals meeting in Minden in January that he said, "wasted a lot of time for a lot of people."

At that meeting, Sawyer said the committee heard from two applicants seeking relief on demerit points that had been applied to their accounts due to infractions that have since been remedied. It was noted only the committee, not staff, could wipe demerit points.

"I think we need to redefine some stuff… give staff more leeway so that when a problem has been resolved it doesn't have to go to an appeal," Sawyer said. "All we did was [waive] the demerit points, which staff agreed with."

Korpela said the township "doesn't give demerit points lightly" and noted staff issue at least one warning before applying them. In most cases, people are given demerit points by refusing to take their STR off the market while they await a licence or rectify a problem, Korpela said.

The CBO feels the appeals committee plays a key role in ensuring people follow the rules. Demerit points stay on an account for three years unless wiped by the appeals committee, Korpela said. Accumulating three demerit points on a property leads to a licence suspension of at least six months.

Sawyer believes appeals should be heard in-house by respective councils instead.

"I don't know why we need the appeals committee, I really don't. For what we've done so far down there, I think it's redundant. If it's an issue in our township, we should be able to resolve it here," Sawyer said.

Changes discussed

Korpela said he'd heard Minden Hills were planning changes to its STR bylaw process, saying that, perhaps, Dysart et al should follow suit.

"Maybe each municipality should go their own way with the STR bylaw and do their own thing," Korpela said.

"We did tell people we would review the bylaw at the end of the [first] year… so maybe that's what we have to do," Fearrey retorted.

Minden Hills mayor Bob Carter said his council has had discussions recently about reviewing the bylaw. He said staff have been asked to speak to other townships to see what their experiences have been to see how the program can run more efficiently.

"We're not planning a rejigging of anything right now. We're just asking for a review and staff to make some recommendations," Carter said. "We're trying to determine what's working and what's not and go from there."

The mayor said program uptake has been lower than expected in Minden too.

"We're less than we anticipated, but if you look at places like Blue Mountain it took almost 10 years to get everybody to comply. It's not an easy thing to do.

"The whole idea is this wasn't supposed to cost the taxpayers anything, but you have to generate enough money to pay for the program… in the first year, that's a difficult thing to do," Carter said. "There's work that needs to be done, absolutely, to get this running smoothly."

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Highlander news

DYSART ET AL NEWS

OP bylaw delayed

Dysart et al council has tabled its proposed official plan and zoning bylaw amendment for at least another month, pending discussions with Harcourt Park Inc. over how to process applications from the organization's 500-plus leaseholders.

A third public meeting for the file was held Jan. 27. Planning director Jeff Iles said there was one change from his previous report, addressing new provincial policy that prohibits the township from having a say in the exterior design of an accessory building.

"The policy now reads gazebos should be screened from the lake and neighbouring properties, meaning the applicant will need to use natural vegetation to screen the building or help it blend with the natural environment," Iles said.

Last month, council agreed to amend its rules to allow gazebos to be placed along the water providing they're at least five metres from shore. Storage sheds will also be permitted five metres from the water on lots with a minimum 15 per cent slope incline from the shore to their residence.

One final sticking point, Iles said, relates to Harcourt Park Inc., which is the landowner for more than 500 leaseholds on Kennaway, Big Straggle, Little Straggle, Allen, Charlie George, Long, East and Barnam lakes.

Under the bylaw as proposed, Harcourt Park Inc. would be responsible for signing any agreement with the township, on behalf of individual leaseholders, to allow a gazebo or shed to be placed on the water. The company is against that resolution.

The company wrote a letter to council asking for four issues to be addressed: that communication be provided outlining the scope of the proposed policy; clarify the intended site plan control framework; include a structure of the agreement and how it will be adapted to Harcourt Park; and that the township present a proactive enforcement plan so the public is aware of how existing legal structures will be enforced.

Re/Max Professionals North is bringing an Easter event to Head Lake Park in March. *File.*

Council says no

A request from the Haliburton Highlands Arts Centre Foundation for the township to waive $37,000 in permit fees for its proposed build on Wonderland Road has been turned down.

Group representatives Dan Manley and Drew Allen were seeking a financial reprieve on a zoning bylaw agreement it will be submitting this year and site plan agreement next year.

"We know council was very generous in gifting us this property, which we have taken official ownership of in October [2025] and we're very thankful for that. We do realize there are tightening belts and budget constraints going on, but wanted to see if council would consider waiving or discounting," Manley said.

Last fall, HHACF spokesperson Beth Kipping told *The Highlander* they had already spent $200,000 on a feasibility study, public engagements and communication plans, preliminary site plan and environmental and traffic studies. She pegged a construction cost of $30-35 million.

At the meeting, Allen said HHACF "are very confident" of raising the money and breaking ground within the next five years.

Following a discussion in-camera, council opted to deny the request.

Easter fun

A new community event will be debuting in Head Lake Park next month.

Re/Max Professionals North is hosting an Easter-themed 'Spring Hop' event March 28, with council agreeing to waive $750 in fees to rent the park for the afternoon.

Keira Casey said the idea, "is to create community within the community. Coming out of winter, we want to get people out and interacting. This will be a free family outing for anybody."

There will be an Easter egg hunt, with kids encouraged to find eggs within the park and swap them for a bag of sweet treats. There will be a colouring station for children, facepainting and food for sale.

Re/Max will be collecting non-perishable food and monerary donations throughout the event, running from noon to 3 p.m., with proceeds supporting the Haliburton 4Cs food bank. *(Dysart et al news by Mike Baker)*

County travel agent says situation on Caribbean island 'a mess'

Continued from page 1

coming to Cuba. I get the emails when the flights are coming. The clients also get the emails. And, then, basically you have to get on that flight when the email comes."

Vasey said with internet scarce in Cuba, some clients don't have cell phones on, so she is emailing them. "They knew what was kind of going on before they left last week and I said if you can get onto internet, check your emails daily, keep in touch with your representative at the hotel, just see what's going on because this is a daily evolving situation."

She wasn't completely floored by the news, saying she had been following the situation in Cuba for years. Last year, she had a large family group sign a waiver in the event something went awry with their travel plans due to shortages.

She termed this week's news "a big deal' for the Canadian travel industry in winter.

"It is a mess. It is definitely a struggle right now. However, it's easier with all airlines following suit now and straight up cancelling the packages. Most are cancelled until early May and some hotels are closed to next November."

She said she felt sorry for Cubans, and the impact on the county's economy. "It's sad, such a beautiful county and all the people there are so friendly."

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Highlander news

Andrew Fletcher is the Haliburton Highlands OPP detachment board chair. *Photo by Lisa Gervais.*

Looming OPP invoice hanging like 'Sword of Damocles'

By Lisa Gervais

Per household costs for OPP policing in the four County townships is less than the Canadian average, but higher than the provincial average, Haliburton Highlands OPP detachment board chair Andrew Fletcher told a Jan. 21 meeting.

Reviewing the 2026 OPP billing statements – capped at an 11 per cent increase this year – Fletcher said Highlands East is paying the most, at $305 per household, followed by Dysart et al, at $294, Minden Hills at $275 and Algonquin Highlands at $239.05. Fletcher said the national average is $362.

"So, you're well within those numbers. We may not be happy about them but, again, the cost of policing seems to be going up."

However, he said OPP cited the provincial average at $203. He said the Highlands municipalities are above that and it was "something we need to manage going forward."

Fletcher said they are also paying less in 2026 than they did in 2016. He added the costs are "really going to bite" the townships when caps and funding support end.

"I think we need to focus on (containing costs) a little bit further in 2026." He added that from an OPP perspective, "their costs are their costs", with things such as wage increases and higher benefit charges.

He said the funding model remains unsustainable for small municipalities. He suggested more provincial government lobbying was needed, not just by mayors and their associations, but detachment boards.

Board member Bob Carter said, "the ominous words in all of this; is the statement says final reconciliation of 2026 costs will appear in your 2028 annual billing statement.

"We were capped at 11 per cent in Minden Hills, and assume everybody else was. The difference was pretty significant. If this keeps accumulating until we get to 2028, it is a little like the Sword of Damocles hanging over our head. I don't know exactly how we are going to afford it," The *Sword of Damocles* is an ancient Greek parable. It signifies a looming, precarious threat.

Carter said there could be a provincial election around 2028 and "the province may decide to be nice to us. I am very, very worried about this."

Fletcher said he knows of some detachments where households pay $329 and $342, and it is $389 in Toronto and $380 in Sudbury. But he conceded the costs continue to rise and are put on households. "That's the key."

Board member Liz Danielsen raised a years-long issue in pointing out billing is done on a per household basis, yet the Highlands has a huge seasonal population. "I believe we are being billed unfairly." She said they had pled their case and "met no success at all, but that doesn't mean we can't revisit that. It is the case for a lot of tourism-based communities."

Community representative Andy Chvedukas said the OPP billing formula had been a sore point for him for years. He recalled the big increase in 2014-15. He noted the OPP Municipal Policing Bureau (MPB) spoke to the board early in its term and he'd like them back to better explain the invoicing. Fletcher said nothing would change unless the provincial government shifted. "I'd still like to keep their (MPB) feet to the fire," Chvedukas said.

Carter agreed it had to be a full court press from all stakeholders. "Once it gets to a certain noise level, the provincial government is going to realize it has an issue."

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Editorial opinion

TheHighlander
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Making a start

By Lisa Gervais

People have been complaining about Minden's downtown for quite some time.

Folks compare downtown Haliburton to downtown Minden and find the latter lacking.

While the owners of some anchor businesses have done a great job of revitalizing the core, others have not. Tough economic times have held some back. Others, such as the owner of the former Beaver Theatre, appear to have gone AWOL.

It's been years since Minden businesses have had a bona fide organization to represent them. It's made it hard for them to lobby the township when it comes to challenges they are facing – and potential solutions.

That does not mean the municipality has abandoned them. A few years ago, it put up money so businesses, such as the River Cone, could renovate their facades.

However, with no council member sitting on a business improvement association (BIA), like Pat Casey does on behalf of Dysart et al council, it has been limiting.

In 2025, coun. Shirley Johannessen stepped up to lobby on behalf of a revitalized downtown core. She was able to get council buy-in for a subcommittee, along with mayor Bob Carter and coun. Ivan Ingram, to look after the core's interests. The township has also been working on its strategic plan, and has been inviting businesses and the general public to provide input.

With the late 2025 formation of the Minden Business Working Group, momentum is certainly building in the hamlet.

The group held its inaugural meeting in early December and met again Feb. 4. The venues have been packed with businesspeople. It is clear they want change and they want it now. One of their spokespeople, Mathew Renda of Boshkung Brewing, told *The Highlander* in an interview that people are sick of talk. They want action. They don't want the status quo.

One low-hanging fruit is April's planned 'paint the town' event. The brainchild of Jim Ecclestone, who's bought the former Rockcliffe, will see volunteers spend two Saturdays doing minor repairs, and then painting, buildings between the Rockcliffe and the bridge. Organizers hope Bobcaygeon Road can be closed to make things a bit easier. The initiative is gaining a lot of traction on social media and has the makings of a great community working bee. This is community building at its finest. We can see folks really getting behind this.

Of course, it is just one step in what the working group hopes will become a movement. Have a look at Minden Auto Care the next time you are in town. They have given the building a facelift and there is a Moose-themed icon out front. It looks fantastic and should hopefully inspire other businesses to follow suit.

There are limits to what the working group can do, however. Case in point the former Beaver Theatre. We need the owner; who once promised apartments and retail; to put up or shut up. We encourage him to follow through on his plans or sell the eyesore so it can be torn down or someone else can step in and do something with it. We urge the township to put the pressure on. As for the old fire hall, putting $50,000 in the budget to do something is a positive step, but work will be required to figure out just what that 'something' is.

However, it's a start and we hope the momentum can continue.

Here to stay... for now

By Mike Baker

Hockey fans across the Highlands scored a major win this week after Haliburton County Huskies top brass confirmed the team is staying in Minden for the 2026-27 season.

The team's long-term future was put into question last summer when owner, Paul Wilson, admitted he was considering selling the team after four seasons of running a deficit. The organization relocated to the County from Whitby ahead of the 2021-22 season.

This week, Wilson confirmed the team had been up for sale for the past few months. At least two parties registered interest, though neither was willing to stay in Minden. Then, up stepped Huskies general manager Ryan Ramsay, who has taken a controlling stake from Wilson, his father-in-law.

It's a fitting role for a man who has lived and breathed Huskies hockey for the past five years. Ramsay was coach of the organization dating back to its days in Whitby, though stepped aside this season after taking a skills and player development role with the Ontario Hockey League's Peterborough Petes. He's still been heavily involved behind the scenes – working to recruit players and building the team's schedule. He's assisted new head coach, Jordan Bailey, on game days when he's in Minden.

Together, Ramsay and Wilson have helped turn the Highlands into a hockey mecca for budding junior hockey talent. They've built a program rooted in respect, hard work and community. Players love playing in Haliburton County.

While they haven't quite succeeded in their goal of winning an Ontario Junior Hockey League championship, the organization has made playoffs in all five seasons it's played here – including this current one, securing a post-season berth with a 6-1 win over the Newmarket Hurricanes on home ice Feb. 1.

This year they've taken a bit of a different approach – both out of want and necessity. In the past, the Huskies have aggressively pursued talented players on the periphery of major junior teams. This year, they recruited young up-and-comers and developed within. The start of the season was rough going, while players got up to speed with the OJHL, but the Huskies have been one of the league's best teams since late November.

The benefit to icing a younger squad is that most of the players are expected to return next season. The Huskies only have four 20-year-olds aging out this year. That helps with continuity, which breeds success, Ramsay said. It also deepens the connection between fans and players when it's familiar faces back year over year.

I've always been impressed by the way the Huskies embrace its younger fans in Haliburton County. Every game at S.G. Nesbitt Memorial Arena, kids line up outside the dressing room looking for autographs and keepsakes, and every game the players oblige. The team routinely goes into local schools for activities. That's the sort of thing that inspires the next generation to follow in their heroes' footsteps.

Ramsay and Wilson have put Haliburton County on the map from a hockey perspective these past few years. NHL agents and scouts are now routinely contacting Ramsay, sounding out the Highlands franchise as an ideal landing spot for players with potential to turn pro.

The proof is in the pudding – a whole host of former Huskies have gone on to play at a higher level, with the likes of Noah Van Vliet, Luca Rea, Charlie Fink, Lucas Stevenson, Oliver Tarr, Boyd Stahlbaum, Payton Schaly and franchise points leader Patrick Saini making NCAA teams. Dozens more have gone on to play USports in Canada.

Our community has been fortunate to be able to watch such a high level of hockey without having to travel more than an hour away. However, unless Ramsay can find a way to balance the books, next year will be the team's last in Haliburton County.

With attendance dwindling this season, the franchise is relying on fans packing the rink for the rest of this season to cheer them on to victory. And next season, too, if we're to ensure the Huskies brand, a known commodity in the hockey world now, lives on.

Editorial opinion

LETTERS

Liven up the downtown core

Dear editor,

Further to Joy Webster's letter in *The Highlander* Feb. 5, I agree with her suggestions about Minden Hills regarding the old fire hall. It could be replaced with a stage and undercover area to attract people to enjoy the farmers market with a roof over their heads, as a rain shelter and for sun protection. Also, to provide a venue for local artists to perform their music etc.

The old Beaver Theatre, or sadly known as the pigeon's den, should be demolished and replaced with new business enterprises, for example, a florist or a nail salon.

It is common practice for residents to travel elsewhere such as Haliburton, Bracebridge etc. to meet their needs for stores not available here.

So, I urge Minden Hills council members to think about this and entertain these thoughts to liven the downtown core of Minden.

Paul Cameron
Minden Hills

Thanks, Highlander

Dear editor,

I'd like to thank the charming young chap, Mike, from *The Highlander*, for telling my story leading up to my 100th birthday celebration.

Almost 250 friends and family attended, and I was overwhelmed with love, best wishes and gifts - some that I don't have the foggiest notion of whom to send a thank you note.

Thanks to my daughter, Lois, for organizing this and to all of those friends who lent a hand in small and big ways on my special day.

Thanks to all those who came to Minden Bible Church to celebrate with me.

Ruth MacBrien
Carnarvon

We want to hear from you

Send us your opinion on any and all things related to living in the County

editor@thehighlander.ca

PHOTO OF THE WEEK

Brenda Cunningham sent this photo of the week from Algonquin Highlands.

Highlands provides natural endorphins

By Susan Tromanhauser

According to Jane Darling, "a load of firewood and chocolate" is the antidote to get through the final weeks of cold and snow in Haliburton County. But Darling doesn't need to take her own advice to "spark her endorphins." She gets all the mood enhancement required by living her best life in the Highlands.

Darling's introduction to the area was more than 30 years ago through a work colleague's invitation to a cottage near Gooderham. Growing up in the St. Lawrence Park area of Toronto, she had an appreciation for green spaces, but the landscape of her neighbourhood had changed and she dreamt of returning to nature. Ten years after her first taste of Haliburton County, she purchased a place in Kinmount, on the border of Minden Hills and Kawartha Lakes. During the COVID transition she made the move full-time.

Darling's days are filled with helping her 80-year-old neighbour with his cattle farm, developing an appreciation for the farming community, specifically its impact on the local economy. She also keeps busy during winter months skiing at Sir Sam's, squeezed between visits to Toronto to visit her adult children. She is able to enjoy city life in small doses only because she knows she gets to return to Kinmount.

But most days, Darling's time is filled with her job at Ampere, a non-profit organization. Based in Lindsay, Ampere provides community resources to develop STEAM skills. An acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics, STEAM has always been a passion for Darling. Studying industrial design at The Ontario College of Art and Design, her initial career in design transformed to digital marketing and consulting work. Her position now as director of social enterprise provides funding for Ampere to act on its mission to remove barriers allowing rural, remote and Indigenous communities access to STEAM activities and resources. Ampere is a nationwide organization and Darling's work has taken her as far away as Nunavut.

A recent project is the sale of small educational solar kits to learn how to live off-grid through solar energy. The kit allows a hands-on experience to charge small items such as a cell phone. She credits Haliburton Solar and Wind from Minden for supporting the project.

The revenue sources Darling is able to create allow Ampere to do what it does best, spread STEAM skills. This is done through learning opportunities such as bi-annual educator conferences and free teacher resources with applicable lesson plans. Darling is proud of the workplace development Ampere provides, as well the promotion of women in trades programs.

There is no need to hibernate with a

Jane Darling. *Submitted.*

load of chocolate for Darling. She gets all the endorphins she needs to survive the doldrums of winter, just by her enthusiasm for her work and her appreciation for the people she surrounds herself with in the Highlands.

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Junior highlanders

Red Hawks grounded

The Hal High Red Hawks senior boys basketball team suffered their first defeat of the season last week, dropping a 62-49 to the IE Weldon Wildcats in Lindsay Feb. 5. After a slow start to the game saw the Wildcats take a commanding lead, the Red Hawks rallied in the third and fourth quarter to bring the scores close but couldn't climb out of the hole. The team has dropped to second in the Central Ontario Secondary Schools Association (COSSA) west division with an 8-2 record – level on points with the Wildcats, who have one game in hand. The senior boys wrapped their regular season with a home tilt against the Brock Bulldogs Feb. 10, losing 60-49.

Top: Isaac Borgdorff jostles for position. Bottom left: Atticus Jorritsma dribbles the ball in the Red Hawks' loss to Weldon. Bottom right: Miles Arpadzic beats his man. *Photos by Mike Baker.*

That's a wrap

The Haliburton Highlands Secondary School Red Hawks junior boys basketball team wrapped its season last week, suffering defeat on the road to Lindsay's IE Weldon Wildcats. The young squad battled hard throughout the game but ultimately fell to a 66-38 loss. The team finished with a 1-5 record. Top: Jett Wilson shields the ball from two Weldon defenders. Middle: Ross Gordon looks for a pass. Bottom: Ashtyn Leckie tries to make a play. *Photos by Mike Baker.*

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Junior highlanders

Above: There were more than 100 submissions for last year's exhibit. Inset: Kylie Simms was one of several students recognized at last year's exhibit. *File*.

Student art attack

By Mike Baker

Students at Archie Stouffer Elementary School (ASES) have been letting their creativity run wild since the new year, says principal Lauren Alleway, as excitement builds for an upcoming youth-led art exhibit at Agnes Jamieson Gallery (AJG).

Now in its third year, the annual event has become one of Shannon Kelly's favourites. The gallery curator said it will run Feb. 21 to March 31, featuring works from students across all grades at ASES.

"The first year we had approximately 40 pieces and last year over 100. I think this year we will be somewhere in the middle," Kelly said. "It is lovely to see how excited and proud the students are to see their work professionally displayed in the gallery, and to be able to show their work to their friends and family."

The exhibit follows a similar theme to its first two iterations, which saw students produce original artwork expressing what Minden means to them (2024) and how they interpret 'The Land Between'.

"Students have been asked to talk or write about their thoughts and feelings on the earth and create a piece of artwork that reflects their innermost feelings through a medium of their choice," Kelly said.

The Minden Hills Cultural Centre Foundation has donated $250 to purchase supplies for the students, Kelly added.

After working with the ASES parent council to coordinate the event for its first two years, Kelly said Alleway took an active role this time around.

Replacing Mike Gervais as principal in the fall, Alleway said the exhibit is a great way for her students to experiment with different art forms.

"This project encourages the use of literacy as an inspiration to their art projects, the use and exposure to multiple mediums," Alleway said. "I think it is also a wonderful opportunity for the students to understand they are part of a larger community, and the vital role that they play."

Kelly confirmed the student exhibit would be the first of a busy 2026 season at AJG. Kicking off the year with featured artwork from local youth has become a tradition, the curator said – one she hopes to continue long into the future.

"This, for me, signals the start of the season. We time the exhibit to be on display over March Break, so we can get as many people as possible in to see it. The support from the community has been amazing over the last two years.

"Art should be an important part of every child's journey because it supports key areas of development – including fine motor skills, cognitive growth and emotional expression," Kelly said. "Through art, children build creativity, problem-solving abilities and decision-making skills while also developing the confidence to see the world through their own eyes."

County-based artists Gary Blundell, Harvey Walker, Nadine Papp and Natalia Brown are returning as jurors for the student exhibit, with awards to be dished out at an artist reception Feb. 28. It will take place at AJG from 1 to 3 p.m.

The gallery is open Tuesday to Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is by donation.

2026 season at Agnes Jamieson

- Oceans and Light: Arctic Ice by Janet Read, March 26-May 23
- 2026 Members' Exhibition by Arts Council-Haliburton Highlands, May 28-July 18
- Museum of Her by Michele Karch-Ackerman, May 28-July 18
- Works by glass artist Brad Copping, July 23 to Sept. 19
- Letters to Earth: Between Despair and Hope group exhibition curated by Carmel Brennan, Sept. 24 to Nov. 28.

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Highlander events

Snap ... that was a cold Hike Haliburton

With cold weather warnings in place, brave Highlanders and visitors took part in the Hike Haliburton-Winter Edition this past weekend. They were rewarded with sunshine, snow-covered trails, frozen lakes and quiet forests. There was a variety of guided hikes and snowshoe adventures led by knowledgeable hike leaders. County of Haliburton manager of tourism, Angelica Ingram, said they had been getting “lots of great feedback. Those who attended definitely enjoyed it.” (*Lisa Gervais*)

Left: David Bishop, centre, led the Eagles Crest hike at Sir Sam’s Ski/Ride. *Photo by Angelica Ingram.* Right: A group taking part in the hike to the High Falls at Algonquin Park’s south gate. *Photo by John Mumford.*

Swing your partner

On a chilly night in Haliburton County, folks attending the old-time winter square dance at the Haliburton Legion warmed things up with some energetic dancing. The event was presented by Dance Happens Here Haliburton (DH3) with Hike Haliburton – Winter Edition and February Folk Festival. Square dance caller, Hannah Shira Naiman, provided the instructions while live bluegrass music was performed by Nathan Smith, Kyle Kirkpatrick, and Tim O’Reilly. There was a special performance by the Haliburton Scottish Country Dancers. Myra Stephen said, “it was warm in the Legion. The floor was bouncing. Everyone jumped right to the floor with the first dance and didn’t stop till the very end. People really had fun.” *(Lisa Gervais)*

Right: Participants at the Old-Time Winter Square dance circle left and right. *Submitted.*

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S.G. NESBITT MEMORIAL ARENA

• The SG Nesbitt Memorial Arena will be open on Monday February 16th, 2026, for Family Day and has a variety of family friendly activities to check out. Take a look at the Minden Hills events calendar online.

• Come and join the staff at the SG Nesbitt Memorial Arena for the PA Day on Friday February 27, 2026. There is a full day PA Day camp for children 4-12 years old, babysitters course for youth 11-15 years old, and drop in Public Skating, Floor Hockey and Basketball.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

We are currently recruiting for the following vacancies:

• Parks Summer Students
• Recreation Summer Students
• Cultural Centre Summer Students
• Part-Time Waste Facilities Operator
• Seasonal Waste Disposal Site Attendants

Please visit our website www.mindenhills.ca/careers for more information and how to apply.

SAFE WINTER DRIVING

When a winter storm is expected, all municipalities have a plan. Drivers need to have their own plan. It is important to delay unnecessary travel during significant storms to give plows time to do their jobs. It’s also safer for drivers.

FAMILY DAY HOURS OF OPERATION

The following Township of Minden Hills offices will be closed on Monday, February 16, 2026 to celebrate Family Day:

• Municipal Administration Office (7 Milne St.)
• Fire Hall Administration Office (12418 Hwy. 35)

The following facilities are open:

• S.G. Nesbitt Memorial Arena will operate 8:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m. with activities
• Minden Hills Cultural Centre will operate 12:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m. with activities
• All waste disposal sites will be open and will operate on Sunday hours.

Our offices and facilities will resume regular hours on Tuesday, February 17, 2026.

COUNCIL MEETINGS VIRTUAL & IN-PERSON

Council and Closed Session meetings are currently being conducted in-person (Council Chambers, 7 Milne St., Minden) and with electronic participation. The scheduled upcoming meetings are:

• February 12 – Regular Council Meeting
• February 26 – Regular Council Meeting

Members of the Public are invited to observe Council proceedings by attending in-person or via the live-stream link.

MINDEN HILLS CULTURAL CENTRE

• A selection of artwork from the Agnes Jamieson Gallery’s permanent collection, as well as new acquisitions, is now on display. The Gallery is open Tuesday to Saturday from 10 am – 4 pm. All are welcome. Admission is by donation.

• Celebrate Lunar New Year at the Minden Hills Cultural Centre on Saturday, February 14 from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM with a fun, family-friendly drop-in craft event. Explore traditional Lunar New Year themes through hands-on activities, including Nian legend storytelling, Chinese calligraphy, firecracker crafts, and a special Year of the Horse craft. All are welcome. Admission is by donation. No registration required.

For information on all the programs and exhibits offered at the Minden Hills Cultural Centre: culturalcentre@mindenhills.ca or call 705-286-3763.

STRATEGIC PLAN – PRIORITIZATION ONLINE SURVEY

Your voice matters in Minden Hills and we need your input. This is your opportunity to share what matters to you as well as helping to guide community priorities for the years to come.

The online survey will be available for input until Friday, February 27, 2026 at 4:30 p.m. visit our website to link to the survey at www.mindenhills.ca.

7 Milne Street, PO Box 359, Minden, ON, K0M 2K0 | Phone: 705-286-1260 • Toll Free 1-844-277-1260 • Fax: 705-286-4917
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Highlander events

Successful fundraiser was in the cards

The Haliburton Forest & Wild Life Reserve Ltd. raised $16,500 for the Dysart et al fire department from the Feb. 7 poker run. General manager Tegan Legge said they had 585 participants this year. First place went to Lauren Glass of Newmarket. Second was Tanya Rempel and third, Scott Collins. Legge said the furthest known rider came for Georgia. “Thank you to our incredible prize donors and to all those who attended,” Legge added. (*Lisa Gervais*)

Top left: Lauren Glass of Newmarket on her brand-new sled. Top right: Third place went to Scott Collins. Bottom left: Tanya Rempel took second place.Bottom middle: The furthest known rider came from Georgia. Bottom right: A group of Haliburton Forest campsite lease holders enjoy pancakes by the fire. *Submitted.*

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NOTICE

Special Council Meetings

2026 BUDGET DELIBERATIONS

TAKE NOTICE that Council will conduct its 2026 budget deliberations during Special Meetings commencing at 9:00 a.m. on the following dates:

- **Monday, February 23, 2026**
- **Tuesday, February 24, 2026**

The meetings will be held in the Council Chambers located at 1123 North Shore Road, Algonquin Highlands.

Members of the Public may also observe Council proceedings by joining a live-stream link. The live-stream link can be found on the meeting Agenda at https://algonquinhighlands.civicweb.net/portal/

Dated this 10th day of February, 2026.

Dawn Newhook, Clerk/Deputy CAO
Township of Algonquin Highlands
1123 North Shore Road
Algonquin Highlands, ON K0M 1S0
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Join us a the Dorset Ice Palace for skating, great music, campfire and hot chocolate. Fun for all ages!

Saturday, February 14th: 8:30am - 3:00pm
Pancake breakfast at 8:30am -10:30am
Adult $10, Child (5 & under) $5

Parade at 10:30am, followed by the opening ceremonies.

Activities include: Activities include: Great Canadian Lumber Jacks, Birds of Prey, Walk Through Zoo, Cardboard Toboggan Races, Live Music, Silent Auction, Maze, Dunk Tank, Wildlife Caller, Wood Carver, Face Painting, Hockey Shoot out, Children and Family Games, Great Food, Vendors and much more!

6:00pm Hockey Night in Dorset!
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Highlander events

ADVERTORIAL

Two ways to show up for your landscape

The fun part is buying the shiny car. The less fun part is going for oil changes. Maintenance, to put it plainly, doesn't do it for me.

My brother-in-law sees it differently. For him, the fun part is the care—the tweaking, the fixing, the polishing. The classic on the driveway with its hood up is stewardship of a precious machine.

Same action but different words—and different attitudes.

And as I look at the landscape blanketed in snow, I'm already thinking of maintenance vs. care when it comes to what's around our homes and cottages.

You can show up to your landscape with maintenance in mind—or with care. From the outside, they look pretty much the same: weeding, pruning, planting, tending. But the experience of doing them is totally different, and over time, so are the results.

When you're maintaining, you have a picture of how things should look. Your job is to hold that image in place. When the landscape drifts from that image, you fix it. When something changes, you change it back. Maintenance asks: how can I keep this the same?

> Landscape maintenance feels like a war of attrition—a war the land will eventually win.

Care is different. With care, you have a relationship. Your job is to pay attention to what's happening and to respond to what the landscape actually needs. Care asks: what do we— the landscape and I—need right now?

How that affects your weekends

When you're maintaining, you're fighting. The landscape wants to change—because that's what landscapes do. Your job is to hold the line, hold it again and keep holding it, weekend after weekend.

There's a tiredness that comes from this. Not the tiredness of physical work, but the tiredness of pulling up to the cottage on a Friday night after a three-hour drive and seeing the lawn needs mowing.

It feels like you're in a war of attrition—a war you know the land will eventually win.

When you're caring, you're responding instead of fighting. Sometimes you guide, sometimes you restrain, and sometimes you just observe. You're not trying to freeze everything in place but are participating in something that's going somewhere.

This doesn't mean care is passive. You're still trimming and planting. It's just the orientation is different.

By Simon Payn

Same plant, different relationship

Imagine a shrub is blocking the view. The maintenance response is to cut it back to the size it "should" be, and keep repeating every time it grows. Then eventually replace it with something better behaved.

The care response is to notice you have a shrub that's happy where it's growing. Then you decide whether the view is more important than a healthy plant. You might trim it, you might move it, or you might leave it. You're aware of the interaction between plant, the landscape, and you. Same shrub. Different relationship.

The thing about maintenance is you're resetting to zero every time. Each weekend, the same problems return because the underlying system hasn't changed. You're buying the same work over and over.

Care, on the other hand, compounds. Every decision you make, every shrub you prune, every tree you leave, builds on the last. The landscape gets easier to care for because you're accumulating knowledge about where the land is going and you're accommodating each other's needs.

Looking at it this way, maintained landscapes are brittle. Stop maintaining them and they run amok. Cared-for landscapes are resilient because they've grown to handle whatever happens.

So the question is: what kind of relationship do you want to be in? And how do you want your Friday nights to feel?

Simon Payn owns Grounded, which designs, installs and cares for ecological landscapes in the Haliburton Highlands.

Ecological gardens and shorelines designed and cared for over time
Native plant landscapes. Looked after, season after season.
For more info and a free guide to natural gardens in Haliburton County, visit groundedgardens.ca
grounded
GARDENING FOR LIFE

Aloha Haliburton

Sir Sam's Ski/Ride hosted its annual ladies' day Feb. 6 with a Hawaiian 'aloha luau' theme. There was skiing, beach-themed activities, dining, and a lip-sync contest. *(Lisa Gervais)*

Top: left to right: Charlee Grove, Darcee Shinn, Kate Maybee, Julianna Cseresnyesi, Nicole Grove, Katie Grove and Julianna Woolsey. Middle: Shelley Doughty, Gabrielle Ploeger, and Kelly Peach pose with an inflatable palm tree. Bottom: Staffers Karen Frybort, Kaleb Smith, and Crystelle Wimperly get into the spirit. *Photos by Lisa Gervais.*

Highlander events

Love is in the air

Haydee Billings, of HB3D Printing, organized a Valentine's market Feb. 7. The event was held at the Minden Lions Club, at 166 Bobcaygeon Rd. More than 10 local artists and vendors brought their wares, with complimentary rainbow heart scratch cards available to attendees.

Top left: right to left: Hayley Phoenix Winterburn and Judy Cox, of Hali's Dreams, peek through a Valentine's Day heart. Right: Bonnie Marshall of B's Creations. Bottom left: Janine Maheu of JayNailedIt. Bottom middle: Market organizer, Haydee Billings, of HB3D Printing. *Photos by Lisa Gervais.*

SIR SAM'S
INN & SPA

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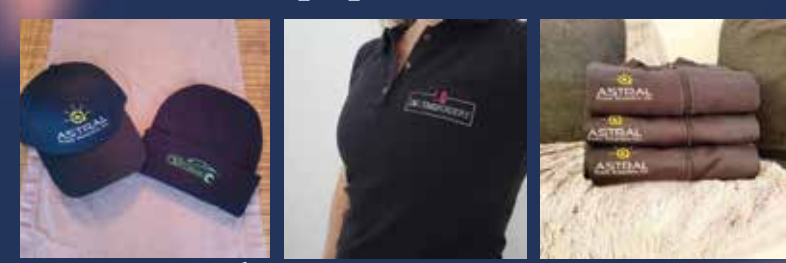

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Huskies chasing home ice advantage for post-season

By Mike Baker

The Haliburton County Huskies missed a chance to leapfrog the Newmarket Hurricanes into third place in the Ontario Junior Hockey League's east conference this week, dropping a 4-3 decision to their fellow contender Feb. 10.

The blue and white got off to a great start in the road tilt, racing out to an early 2-0 lead courtesy of goals from Ryan Gosse, notching on the powerplay at 4:30, and Kieran Raynor, tickling twine at 11:17.

The Huskies were dominant in that opening frame, rallying off 18 shots to Newmarket's nine, but the home side got back into the game with a tally late in the period, swinging momentum back in their favour.

Newmarket restored parity four minutes into the second, but the visitors didn't let that phase them – Isaac Larmand helped himself to his 22nd goal of the season and third point of the game, after assisting on the first two goals, to put the Huskies ahead again at 7:36.

It was a difficult third period for the Huskies, who were boxed into their own zone for long periods. They were outshot 17 to three, giving up two late goals to a Newmarket team that could smell blood.

"I think we have to do a much better job at closing these kind of games out. We did all the right things to put ourselves in a position to win… we just got away from what we were doing right," said head coach Jordan Bailey. "Our defence weren't moving pucks north and our forwards needed to chip more pucks into their zone. We tried to force too many plays, which, against a good team, allows them to counter and generate momentum."

One positive for the visitors was having alternate captain Kaiden Thatcher back in the lineup after he missed Saturday's win over the Burlington Cougars to play for the Ontario Hockey League's Peterborough Petes.

In his first major junior appearance of the season, Thatcher was a plus-one, had a shot on goal and was assessed a two-minute minor in the Petes' 3-2 win over the Owen Sound Attack.

Bailey said Thatcher is the latest of several Huskies to be called up to the OHL this season, following teammates Luis Sturgeon and Kieran Raynor in Peterborough and Easton Poe with the North Bay Battalion.

"Anytime we get that call and one of our players can make the jump, it's a good thing. We're a development league. Our job is to try to help players get to the next level. So, we're happy anytime we get the call because it means we're doing something right. And it's always a great experience for those guys – they always come back a little more energized," Bailey said.

Huskies 7 Burlington 4

The home crowd at S.G. Nesbitt Memorial Arena were treated to a scoring spectacle Feb. 5 as the Huskies locked horns with the west conference's Burlington Cougars for the first time this season.

Gosse and Josh Denes each helped themselves to a pair of goals, with Chase Del Colombo, Brody Coe and Liam Oravsky also getting on the scoreboard. Twelve different Huskies put up points in the effort, with Owen Edwards backstopping the team to an important win – stopping 29 of 33 shots.

"Burlington had won 10 of their last 11 games, so were on a hot streak coming in. They played the night before in Collingwood, so we knew we had to jump all over them early and have a good start. We were able to do that and that really helped us settle in and earn the two points," Bailey said.

With the OJHL regular season winding down, the Huskies have a gruelling run over the next couple of weeks. They play six games in 10 days, starting with a road tilt in Stouffville Feb. 12. The Huskies then host the Wellington Dukes Feb. 14 and Pickering Panthers Feb. 16 – teams immediately around them in the standings.

Defenceman Kaiden Thatcher was the latest call-up for OHL action, playing in the Peterborough Petes 3-2 win over Owen Sound Feb. 5. *Submitted.*

The blue and white then play the North York Rangers Feb. 17, Lindsay Muskies Feb. 20 and Markham Royals Feb. 21.

Currently sitting fifth in the east, two points back of both the Panthers and Hurricanes, Bailey said it's in his team's hands whether they can secure home ice advantage in the first round of playoffs.

"We have two games in hand on Newmarket and are level with Pickering, though we do play them, so we do control our own fate," Bailey said. "This will be a good test for us. We've been playing a lot of hockey as of late and this is a heavy run coming up too. Every game [is like a game seven] at this point, with everyone jostling for position. The message to the guys is to dig in, stay the course and keep doing what's gotten us here so far.

"This run is a great test because there will be a lot of back-to-backs come playoffs. It's very rare you get two days off before a game in the post-season, so this is an opportunity to get up to speed early," Bailey said.

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Home of the Highland Storm

Grayson Pelley shoots and scores in the first period on the way to a 2-2 tie. *Photo by Lisa Gervais.*

Team shows real growth

The U13LL Casey's Water Well & Geothermal Inc. team put forward a huge effort in their game against the second-place Brock Green, showing grit, skill, and teamwork from start to finish.

The defensive unit of Olivia Emmerson, Parker Fessey, Beau Gilmour, Brody Alton, Nathan Hill, and Blair Fisher turned in a stellar performance, showcasing their poise and discipline at the blueline. Their ability to read the play and hold the zone kept the pressure on the opposition all game long.

Emmerson and Fessey set the tone early with smart positioning and quick stick work, breaking up rushes before they could develop. Gilmour and Alton showed excellent puck movement, keeping plays alive in the offensive zone and making clean exits when needed. Hill and Fisher anchored the group with physicality and confidence, shutting down lanes and winning key battles along the boards.

The team's forward units showcased excellent chemistry and relentless forechecking, setting the tone offensively from the drop of the puck. Jace Jones, Grayson Pelley, and Mason Mihlik worked seamlessly with Charlie Mainprize jumping in to sustain zone time. Their puck movement down low created repeated cycles that forced turnovers and kept the opposing defence pinned deep, generating several quality scoring chances through traffic.

The Aliyah Cox, Nolan Frybort, and Kylie Simms trio followed with strong transitional play, turning neutral-zone recoveries into quick counterattacks. Their ability to support each other on entries and maintain close spacing allowed them to pressure puck carriers effectively, often forcing hurried clears or icing calls that tilted the ice in their favor.

Rounding out the attack, Raelyn Adlam, Miller Brown, and Jack Guyatt brought gritty, high-energy shifts that kept the pace high. Their persistent forecheck and quick reads off each other's plays prevented the opposition from establishing any rhythm on the breakout. Together, these lines created wave after wave of sustained pressure, wearing down defenders and keeping the team on the front foot for much of the night.

The team came out flying with a 2–0 lead in the third, but a few tough breaks late had us end things in a 2–2 tie.

We were missing Walker's strong defensive presence, but everyone stepped up to fill the gap. All in all, it was a game full of heart, teamwork, and signs of real growth across the lineups. (*Submitted*)

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Feb. 3
U11 Carquest Minden vs Woodville 8-4 W
U15 Minden Pharmasave vs Mariposa 7-2 W
U18 Rep Haliburton Timber Mart vs Brock 4-3 W
Feb. 5
U13 Casey's Water Well and Geothermal Inc vs Brock 2-2 T
Feb. 6
U13 Casey's Water Well and Geothermal Inc vs Manvers 5-3 W
Feb. 7
U15 Rep Cheryl Smith RE/MAX vs Durham 5-1 W
U15 The Pepper Mill Steak and Pasta House vs Durham 4-2 W
U15 Minden Pharmasave vs Kawartha 7-3 W
Feb. 8
U9 Sharp Electric vs Kawartha 5-2 W

STARS of the WEEK

KYLIE SIMMS
Kylie brought relentless energy to every shift, battling hard in the corners and refusing to give her opponents an inch of space.

NATHAN HILL
Nathan delivered a standout performance on the blueline. His positioning and stick work broke up key scoring chances, keeping opponents at bay.

BLAIR FISHER
Blair's presence in the defensive zone stood out with relentless effort in the corners.

Photos by Tim Tofflemire

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What's on

ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION EVENTS

Royal Canadian Legion - Branch 129 Haliburton

Mondays: Office open 9 a.m. to noon, clubroom closed. Bridge at 1 p.m., youth dart league (ages 10-18) 6:20 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Tuesdays: Cadets after school starts at 5 p.m., meeting starts at 6 p.m. Games and cards night starting at 6:30 p.m. All are welcome. Darts league 7 p.m. start.
Wednesdays: Bid euchre 1 p.m. start, Remembrance Hall. Bingo will resume in the spring.
Thursdays: General meeting third Thursday of the month, March to December; ladies auxiliary meeting last Thursday of the month, February to November.
Fridays: Meat draw, five draws, five prize each draw, first draw at 4:30 p.m., last draw at 6:30 p.m., tickets are $2 per draw; fun darts at 4:30 p.m. onwards; 50/50 draw at 5 p.m., tickets are $1 and available in the clubroom.
Saturdays: Open only for special events Office hours: Monday 3 to 6 p.m., Tuesday 5 to 9 p.m., Wednesday/Thursday 3 to 6 p.m., Friday 3 to 7 p.m., Saturday/Sunday closed Clubroom hours: Monday 3-6 p.m., Tues 5-9 p.m., Wed/Thurs 3-6 p.m., Fri 3-7 p.m., Saturday/Sunday closed.

Royal Canadian Legion - Mabel D. Brannigan Branch 636 Minden

Lunch 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. **Monday to Thursday** with regular menu and daily special including Liver Lovers' **Tuesday**.
Friday Fish & Chips & Wings. Lunch 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and dinner 4-7 p.m.
Saturday all day breakfast 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. with meat draws at 11 a.m.
Call ahead any day for take-out: 705-286-4541
Weekly activities:
Karaoke: call for dates
Monday: Rug Hookers every second week.
Monday: Euchre 1-3 p.m.
Thursday: Cribbage 1-3 p.m., Darts 7-9 p.m. and euchre 7-9 p.m.

Royal Canadian Legion - Branch 624 Wilberforce

Monday: open 7 to 10 p.m. There's darts Feb. 16 and 23 at 7 p.m. Cost is $5 per player.
Tuesday: closed, special events only. Feb. 17 and 24 is seniors exercise club at 1:30 p.m.
Wednesday: open 2 to 10 p.m. Feb. 18 and 25 is darts at 2 p.m. $5/player. There's also quick supper from 5 to 6:30 p.m., with the menu changing weekly. Cost is $10 per person. And open cribbage starts at 6:30 p.m., no need to pre-register.
Thursday: open 2 to 10 p.m. HHHS social rec Feb. 12 and 26 at 10 a.m.
Friday: open 2 to 11 p.m. Feb. 20 is fish and chips from 5 to 8 p.m. One piece is $15, two pieces is $20. Feb. 13 and 27 is wings and jam session from 5 to 8 p.m. Cost is $15 per pound. Feb. 13 and 27 is community care 55+ lunch at noon, cost is $17 per person.
Saturday: open 2 to 9 p.m. Meat draw Feb. 14, 21 and 28 at 3 p.m. Feb. 14 is the Ken McFarlane Memorial Family Day lake trout ice fishing derby, weigh in at 3 p.m. Register by Feb. 13. Valentine's Day dance Feb. 14 from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. Trivia Feb. 28 at 7 p.m., $5 per player.
Sunday: closed, special events only.

EVENTS

Feb. 14, 9 a.m. Ice racing at the Minden Fairgrounds. Admission is free for spectators – come out and watch as dozens of drivers jostle for position on the slick track. Racing also takes place Sunday, Feb. 15 with an 11 a.m. start time.

Feb. 14, 1 to 3 p.m. Opening reception for 'Arts & Science', a new members exhibition at Rails End Gallery. Showcasing works by more than 50 gallery members. Admission is free, though donations are welcome.

Feb. 14, 5 to 7 p.m. Valentine's Day all-you-can-eat buffet and show at the Haliburton Legion. Enjoy a photo booth, live music and food from Till Death BBQ. Options include fish and chips, brisket, pulled pork, chicken, mac and cheese and more. Tickets are $50.

Feb. 15, 10 a.m. to noon. The Haliburton Highlands Land Trust launches its 2026 Discovery Days programming with an animal tracks and signs event for children, being held at the HHOA fish hatchery. For children ages 5-12. This hands-on event is led by outdoor educator Rick Whitteker. An adult must accompany their registered child. Sign up at www.haliburtonlandtrust.ca. Admission by donation.

Feb. 15, noon. The 2026 Benoir Lake Speed Fest and Radar Run returns to Dysart et al. Participants will gather at 4185 Elephant Lake Rd., where there will be a cash BBQ, games, raffle tickets and 50/50 draw. All proceeds support the breakfast and lunch program at Wilberforce Elementary School. Come out and freeze for a cause.

Feb. 15, 2 to 4 p.m. Dave Fougere tribute concert at the Haliburton Highlands Museum. Hosted by Kate Hall and Laurel McCauley, this event will bring together friends from the local music community to cover songs and pay tribute to the late Dave Fougere. Admission by donation.

Feb. 16, 8 a.m. Stanhope Ice Fishing Derby. Hosted by the Stanhope firefighters, people can gather at Elvin Johnson Park overlooking Halls Lake. Entry fee is $40 per person. Lots of prizes for biggest fish, most fish and more.

Feb. 16, noon to 2 p.m. Family Day Open House at the Minden Hills Cultural Centre. There will be hands-on nature-themed arts and crafts at Nature's Place, programming by local entomologist Basil Conlin featuring a traveling bugs display, skating at the outdoor rink, chili and hot dogs by Minden Rotary and more. Admission is by donation.

Feb. 18, 7:30 p.m. The Lake Kashagawigamog Organization is holding a virtual 'Love Your Lakes' seminar featuring Tim James, adjunct associate professor at Queens University. The topic is 'our lakes and enhanced wakes: impacts and a solution'. Register online at lko.ca.

Feb. 19, 6:30 p.m. Community drum circle at Rails End Gallery. Open to all. Free to members, guests and drop-ins by donation. Come out and experience an endorphin-boosting hour of sound. Taking place every Thursday evening.

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What's on

Snowball rolls into Dorset for Family Day

By Mike Baker

It's a busy few days across the Highlands, with plenty on the schedule as folks plan for their Family Day long weekend – including the 34th annual Dorset Snowball winter carnival.

Taking over the hamlet Feb. 13-14, the outdoors festival, organized by Algonquin Highlands township, has something for everyone says staffer Sandra Rogers.

"We have lots of interactive activities people can participate in, lots of fun features. There's stuff for every age and it's all covered with the entry fee – the only additional cost will be for food and goods offered by some of our vendors," Rogers said.

Snowball buttons, which grant access to most activities, are $5 per person, with children two and under free.

The festivities begin Friday night with a community skating party at the Dorset Ice Palace, located within Lions Centennial Park, from 6 to 9 p.m. Rogers confirmed there will be a campfire, live music and hot chocolate.

The frosty fun continues Saturday, kicking off with a pancake breakfast at the Dorset Recreation Centre from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. (additional fee, adults are $10 and children five and under $5). The ceremonial Snowball parade will take participants from the Dorset Garage to the rec centre at 10:30 a.m.

There will be various activities running at Centennial Lions Park, the rec centre and Tapscott Lopes Park from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., including: horse drawn wagon rides, courtesy of Thunder Ridge Farm; inflatable maze; dunk tank; public skating; woodcarving by Colin Brown; wildlife calling by Steve Morrin; a children's colouring contest and facepainting; walkthrough zoo by Amanda's Exotic Animals; balloon art; maple taffy; inflatable axe throwing and virtual reality dog sled tours.

Featured activities include a hockey shootout at the Dorset Ice Palace at 11:15 a.m., with pre-registration and helmets required; Great Canadian Lumber Jack show in the rec centre parking lot at 11 a.m., 1:30 and 3 p.m.; The Eyrie Birds of Prey show in the rec centre gymnasium at 11:30 a.m., 1 and 2 p.m.; and the traditional cardboard toboggan race at Centennial Lions Park at noon, with pre-registration and helmets required.

Snowball concludes with Hockey Night in Dorset at 6 p.m., with this year's tilt pitting the Dorset Hounds against Lake of Bays at the Dorset Ice Palace.

It's Snowball weekend in Dorset, with the popular event running Feb. 13-14. *File.*

Also on the agenda

Rails End Gallery is holding an opening reception for its annual members exhibition, this year titled 'Arts and Science', on Saturday from 1 to 3 p.m. Curator Laurie Jones said the group show brings together new work by more than 50 gallery members.

"Rather than illustrating science directly, the exhibit looks at how artists and scientists often work in similar ways – asking questions, testing ideas, paying close attention and learning through making," Jones said. "Together, the exhibition offers a snapshot of how artists in this region are thinking about the world.

The exhibition is open during regular gallery hours, Wednesday-Friday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Minden Hills Cultural Centre is opening its doors Monday for its annual Family Day open house from noon to 2 p.m.

There will be hands-on nature-themed arts and crafts at Nature's Place and a special interpretive program led by local entomologist Basil Conlin, with an insect specimen display exploring the relationship between insects, humans and the environment. Visitors can also enjoy free skating at the Dawson Hamilton Outdoor Memorial Rink in the heritage village, while Minden Rotary will be offering chili and hot dogs.

The party continues at S.G. Nesbitt Memorial Arena, with musician Carl Dixon on hand for a special concert at 1 p.m. before the Haliburton County Huskies take on the Pickering Panthers at 2 p.m. Entry to the concert is covered with a game ticket.

Ice fishing derby set to hook community support

Reeling in a big catch may be part of the appeal, but for West Popp, ice fishing is more about bringing people together.

Popp, a spokesperson for the Stanhope Firefighters Association Ice Fishing Derby, is helping organize the event alongside fellow firefighters. The derby is set to take place Feb. 16 at Elvin Johnson Park on Halls Lake and invites the public to spend a day on the ice in support of community initiatives.

Popp is vice-president of the association and an acting captain with the Algonquin Highlands fire department, where he has served for five years. He said the event is intended to strengthen community connections while raising funds for local causes.

"Along with the rest of our members of our association, we're hoping to make it as big as possible and get as many people together to help support our good cause," he said.

Funds raised by the derby will support community-based events in Algonquin Highlands, including the annual Christmas party held at the Stanhope Community Centre. The December event brought together dozens of children and hundreds of residents to celebrate the season with Santa and Canadian musician David Archibald.

"People should participate in this to get the family and friends together and enjoy a nice day on the hard water while also enjoying some peaceful competition," he said.

Popp said ice fishing offers value beyond the catch itself.

"What I like about ice fishing is it is a great opportunity to get your family and friends together," he said. "Even if the fish aren't biting that day, at least you're out there spending time together. Ice fishing is also a very important and dependable resource that many people rely on each year."

Popp said he hopes the derby will become an annual event.

"That way, we can get the community together every year and build on it and get it even bigger every year," he said.

Because the derby takes place during Family Day weekend, Canadian residents do not require a fishing licence. Participants must carry identification and comply with conservation limits and regulations.

The entry fee is $40. Prizes will be awarded for the biggest fish, along with a door prize. Registration is available by email at 80SFFA@gmail.com or in person at Elvin Johnson Park. *(Submitted)*

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EVENT

EVENT – KARATE Self-defense lessons. Start anytime, Minden Lions Club, Tuesday & Thursday from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Taught by 7th Dan, 3rd Dan & 2nd Dan Black belt instructors. Contact 705-286-3823 or 613-246-4721 or samuriron@hotmail.com

NOTICE

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS MEETINGS - Sundays - 10:30 am at St. Anthony's, 27 Victoria Street Haliburton. Wednesdays - 7:00 PM at Highland Hills United Church, 21 Newcastle St. in Minden - rear door. Thinking about alcohol. Thinking about stopping. We've been there. We can help!

AL ANON- WE CARE, are you troubled by someone's drinking? Meetings: Thursdays 7 p.m., St. Anthony's 27 Victoria Street, Haliburton, and Mondays 7 p.m. at Highland Hills United Church, 21 Newcastle, Rear Entrance, Minden. 1-888-4AL-ANON (1-888-425-2666) al-anon.org All are welcome.

HELP WANTED

The Highlander is hiring casual photographers to join our team

Candidates must have their own car and camera equipment. Weekend work is required. The ideal candidate should be skilled at taking portraits and comfortable engaging with people to gather their names and a few words.

Contact us at **mike@thehighlander.ca** to apply today!

TheHighlander

HELP WANTED

The Municipality of Dysart et al
is recruiting a
Deputy Treasurer

Due to an upcoming retirement, we are seeking applications from experienced and qualified candidates to fulfill the position of Deputy Treasurer.

The complete detailed job description can be viewed through the Municipal website at: www.dysartetal.ca/municipal-government/careers/

We offer a comprehensive benefit program and enrolment in the OMERS pension plan and a competitive salary grid from $80,464 to $94,131 per annum. Expected start date is Monday, May 4, 2026.

Please submit a resume and cover letter, preferably via email, no later than 4:00 pm on Monday February 23, 2026, to the attention of the Human Resources Manager – Municipality of Dysart et al – hr@dysartetal.ca

P.O. Box 389, Haliburton, Ontario K0M 1S0

We thank all of those who apply, but only those selected for an interview will be contacted. Accommodation for applicants with disabilities will be provided upon request. The Municipality of Dysart et al is an equal opportunity employer. Personal information is collected in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and will be used only for employment purposes.

MUNICIPALITY OF HIGHLANDS EAST — Yours to Explore. highlandseast.ca

The Municipality of Highlands East
Is Currently Seeking A

Full-Time, Assistant Environmental Operator to fill a vacancy in the Environmental Department

Current Rate of Pay per CUPE Local 4416 Collective Agreement: $31.19/hour

40 Hours per week, Monday – Friday 7:00 am to 3:30 pm
On-call required. Overtime, some evening and weekends required.
Position to commence as soon as possible.

Reporting to the Environmental Supervisor, the successful candidate will be responsible for the operation and maintenance of the Municipal water and wastewater facilities, including treatment, distribution and collection systems. Duties will include Operator-in-charge (OIC) designation in accordance with all relevant Municipal, Provincial, and Federal legislation, standards and policies. Perform on-call duties, as required, on a rotational basis.

To apply you must possess:

- Post-Secondary Diploma such as Environmental Technician, or equivalent combination of education/work experience.
- Grade 12 or equivalent.
- Valid Ontario Class "G" Driver's License.
- Minimum Operator-in-Training certification in all four disciplines (Water Treatment, Water Distribution, Wastewater Treatment, Wastewater Collection), would be considered an asset.

A copy of the detailed job posting, and description are available upon request or on the Highlands East website at www.highlandseast.ca

If you are interested in joining our dedicated team of municipal professionals, applications **clearly marked "Application – Full-Time, Assistant Environmental Operator"** may be submitted on or before 12:00 p.m, Thursday, February 26th, 2026 via email, mail, in person, or fax. Interested applicants may submit their resume, including references, in confidence to:

Tracy Vader, HR/Payroll Coordinator
Municipality of Highlands East
P.O. Box 295, 2249 Loop Road
Wilberforce, ON K0L 3C0
E-Mail: humanresources@highlandseast.ca

We thank all applicants for their interest but only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

The Municipality of Highlands East is an equal opportunity employer. Applicants requiring accommodation are asked to contact the HR/Payroll Coordinator.

In accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the information gathered will be used solely for candidate selection purposes only. Questions about this collection should be directed to Tracy Vader, HR/Payroll Coordinator.

Highlander classifieds

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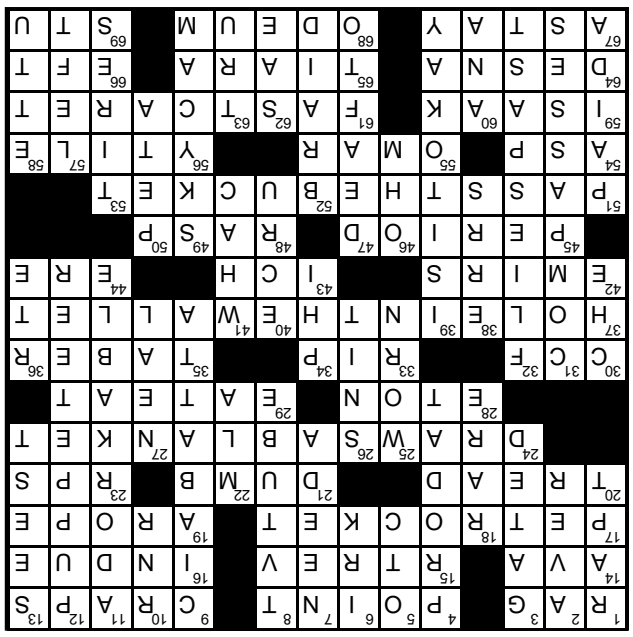
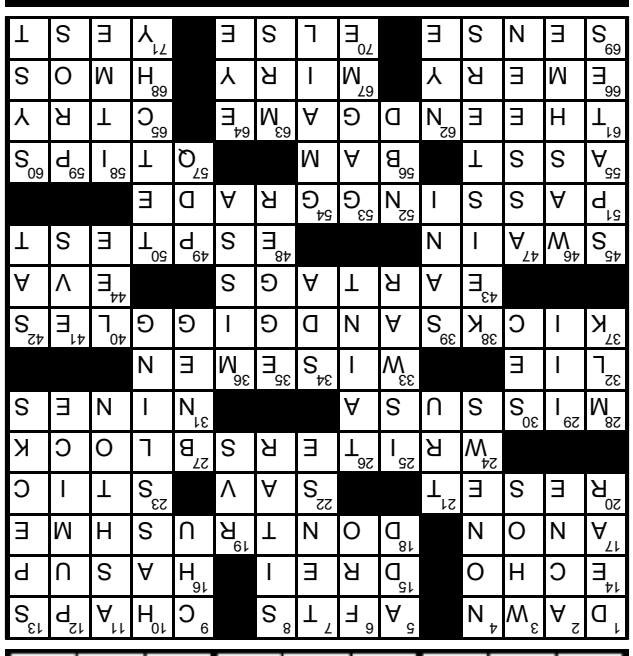
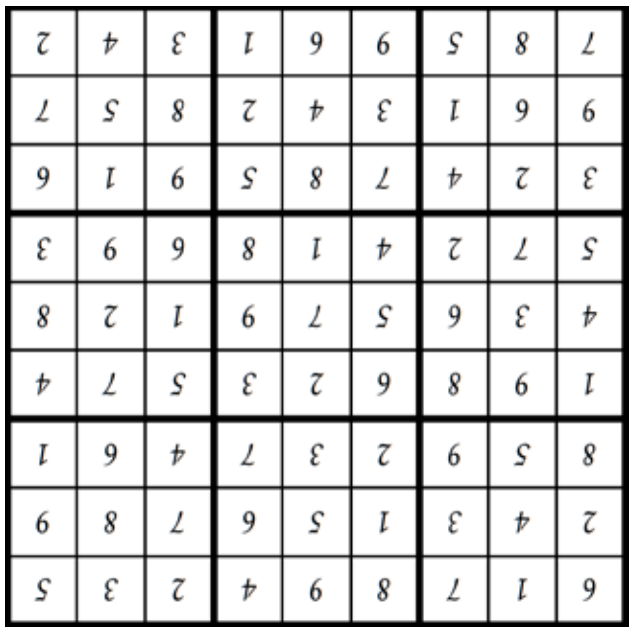
LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS



THIS WEEK'S SOLUTIONS





OBITUARIES

In Loving Memory of

Gerald Taylor

Gerald passed away with his wife Gloria of 59 ½ years, his twin brother John (Karen), and long-time friends John and June at his side. Gerald will be especially missed by Heather, who considered him her second father. He was predeceased by his parents, Jack and Maisie, and older brother Lawrence. He will be fondly remembered by his many nephews, nieces, extended family, and friends.

Private Funeral Arrangements

Cremation has taken place. As per Gerald's wishes, there will be no public visitation or funeral. A private celebration of life with family and friends will be held at a later date. As an expression of sympathy, donations to HHHS Foundation – Hyland Crest Long Term Care or Parkinson Society Canada would be appreciated by the family. Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to the **HALIBURTON COMMUNITY FUNERAL HOME**, 13523 Hwy #118, Haliburton, ON K0M 1S0 (705) 457-9209.

In Loving Memory of

Rita Ann Baird

(nee Carlisle)

Passed away peacefully at the Haliburton Hospital on Sunday, February 1, 2026 with her loving family by her side.

Beloved wife of the late Don Baird (1994). Loving mother of Louise Baird (Rob Roy) and Julie (Brett) Charboneau. Loving nana of Jessica Knowles, Jordana Baird, Rachel Charboneau and great nana of Brennan Heinecke and Elliot Heinecke. Daughter of the late Harry and Hetty Carlisle. Dear sister of Harry (Ailsa) Carlisle, Marilyn (Peter) Hatt, David (Wendy) Carlisle, sister-in-law of Anne Carlisle, predeceased by Brian (Janet) Carlisle. Lovingly remembered by her nieces and nephews; Michelle and Tracey Carlisle, Christopher and Michael Hatt, Thomas and William Carlisle and by her great niece Megan Carlisle.

Rita was a proud member of the former Women's Institute. She spent many summer afternoons enjoying life with her friends at 9 Bobcaygeon Road, Minden.

In accordance with Rita's wishes, cremation has taken place and to Celebrate her life, a "High Tea" will be held in Minden and Toronto at a later date. Interment at Parklawn Cemetery, Toronto. A family service will also be held in England.

Memorial Donations to the Minden Community Food Centre (Minden Food Bank) would be appreciated by the family and can be arranged through the Gordon A. Monk Funeral Home Ltd., P.O. Box 427, Minden, Ontario KoM 2Ko.

www.gordonmonkfuneralhome.com

www.gordonmonkfuneralhome.com

LOCKSMITH

Skycor Locksmithing
info@skycor.ca
705-879-9668
www.skycor.ca
@skycorlocksmithing

HELP WANTED

We're hiring for the season

Grounded is looking for a few people to join its field team this season—casual, on-call work from May through October doing hands-on ecological landscaping.

This suits people who want flexible outdoor work without the commitment of a full-time job, or anyone who just wants to spend time outside doing something physical and useful. We're also open to bringing on a student for more regular hours over the summer.

Pay starts at $22 per hour. If this sounds like you—or someone you know—details are at groundedgardens.ca/hiring.

grounded
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CUSTOM BUILDS

We're Hiring!

- **Position:** Lead Carpenter at Braun Custom Builds.
- **Wage:** $34.00–$37.00 per hour.
- **Employment:** Year-round, stable work with no holidays or weekends required.
- **Benefits:** Includes dental, extended health care, company vehicle, and a positive, family-friendly work environment.
- **Schedule:** Monday–Thursday 7:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. (½ hour lunch); Friday 7:30 a.m.–3:00 p.m.; 40–44 hours per week.
- **Key Responsibilities:** Lead and mentor the carpentry team, assign tasks, inspect work, manage job sites, uphold safety, and assist with project management.
- **Requirements:** At least 5 years' supervisory experience; proficiency in framing, trim, doors/windows, siding, cabinetry, flooring; strong leadership and professionalism; knowledge of construction codes and safety.

Contact Us

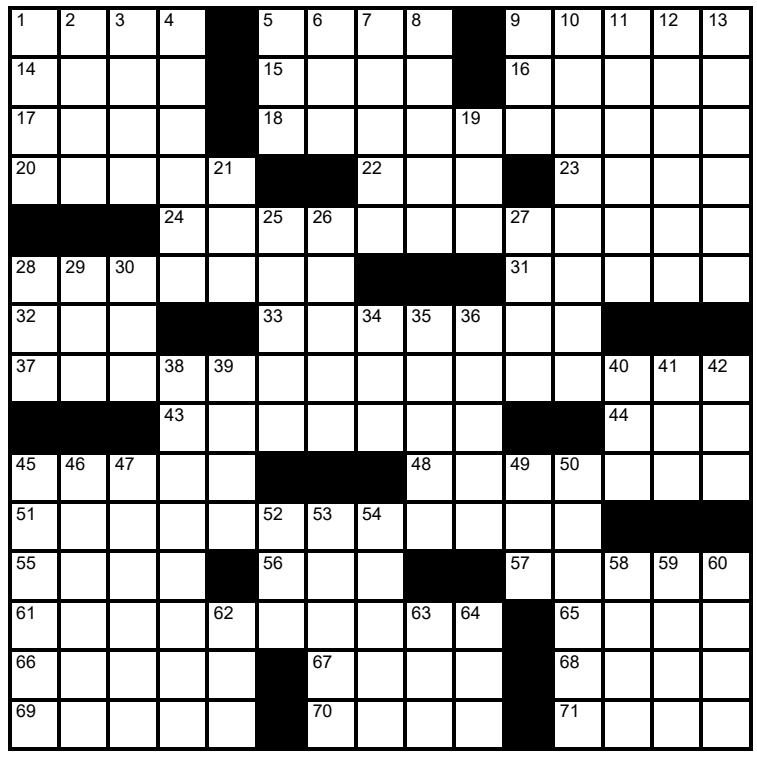
Office Phone: 705-457-6807
Executive Assistant: 705-457-7454
Office Email: office@brauncustombuilds.ca

TheHighlander
2026 HANDBOOK
CONTACT US TODAY!
laurie@thehighlander.ca | dawn@thehighlander.ca
705-457-2900 | 705-306-5015

Highlander puzzles

Hut!

by Barbara Olson
© ClassiCanadian Crosswords



Across

1 Elicit an "aha!", with "on"
5 Boat backs
9 Biker pants
14 Fifth in the NATO alphabet
15 German "three"
16 Hosts in the penthouse
17 "Author unknown": Abbr.
18 Plea to a charging football carrier?
20 Time change action
22 Cab-___ wine
23 Bic Clic ___ (pen brand)
24 Impeding move in an Authors' Football League game?
28 Annual beauty pageant
31 Upside-down 6s
32 Say with fingers crossed, maybe
33 Manger trio
37 Punts while reacting to a silly joke?
43 Wildlife tracking aids
44 "The Loco-Motion" singer Little ___
45 Loverboy of old
48 Clairvoyant-claimer's exam
51 Evaluation of a Hail Mary move?
55 Second-in-command: Abbr.
56 Emeril exclamation
57 Canal-cleaning nonos, to a doctor
61 Sport featuring edge defenders?
65 One of Africa's 54: Abbr.
66 Mani-pedi board
67 Like a swamp
68 U.S. health plans
69 It might be spidey
70 Besides that
71 24 hours ago: Abbr.

Down

1 Letter opener
2 Bad spots for picture day
3 Seuss's Cindy Lou and family
4 "Nothing to report"
5 Throw in
6 Oprah's natural do, for short
7 Past or future
8 Hindustani music instrument
9 "Crazy Rich Asians" director Jon
10 Bugging nonstop
11 "Punk'd" host Kutcher
12 Heel-scuffing stone
13 Barely-visible dots
19 CanaDream rentals
21 Kamloops, B.C. campus: Abbr.
25 "This ___!" (major conflict declaration)
26 Sully
27 Rare blood type, briefly
28 Jan. 14, 2024 honouree, initially
29 180° from IX, on some clocks
30 Triple ___ (Cointreau)
34 Sat. churchgoers
35 A&W's Bacon & ___
36 Doesn't ___ beat (is sharp-minded)
38 Seating areas, slangily?
39 Cleaning product prefix
40 Jeans brand with a leather patch
41 Charging station lineup, for short
42 Prepared for bad news, maybe
45 Sudden deluges
46 Message on a dirty car
47 Words before "on T.V.!"
49 "Not now but right now!"
50 Liable to snap
52 Texter's "Don't sweat it"
53 "___ with a spoon!"
54 Outlook alternative
58 "I can relate," in memes
59 "Aye" voters
60 Method: Abbr.
62 "Auld Lang Syne" day: Abbr.
63 Title with a silent letter
64 Needle feature

Can you eat with your dentures? ~ The answer should be yes, call us!

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and shorelines
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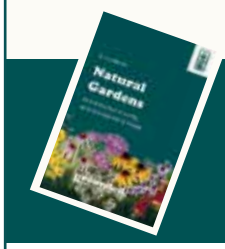

For a free guide to natural gardens in Haliburton County, visit groundedgardens.ca.

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Highway 35
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